



Indy Mopar Club News

www.indymoparclub.com

May 2020

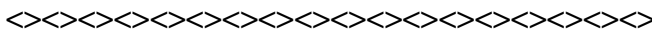
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Meetings are the last Thursday of every month except November & December.

Next regular meeting: **May 28, 2020 Cancelled.**



NOTE: Considering the current City of Indianapolis' virus guidelines through June 1, the May 28 Indy Mopar Club Meeting is cancelled. Hopefully conditions will be improved so we can hold the June 25th meeting at the MCL.

May 2020 Message from the IMC Club President

Hello everyone. Again, I hope this newsletter finds all of you, your family and your friends still healthy and in better spirits as temperatures improve and some limited reopening is occurring. I find myself still quite concerned about getting socially active too soon based on my own past health conditions so will keep the mask and wipes handy for some time but I pray the situation will improve sooner than later.

If you are keeping tabs on the major Chrysler shows across the country, many were cancelled through June but some of the majors like Chrysler at Carlisle (July) and Mopar Nationals (August) are still on the schedule so we'll just have to wait and see. The May Indy 500 festivities and races along with the Indy Mecum auction have both been rescheduled so I'm sure hoping to see those still occur in 2020.

Steve Wisdom is in contact with Fletcher regarding our Cruise-in set for July 11. There are still a lot of unknowns based on current conditions so we will keep you posted.

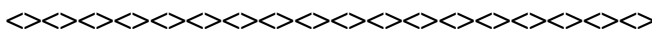
I sure wish there was better news to discuss but still a wait and see. I'm still optimistic about some activities this summer and we will plan them as quick as we are sure there is no risk to our members and their families health.

As usual, we would like to hear from members for interesting notes in our newsletter. If you or your family have a topic either car related or community service in this challenging time, please drop a note to the website listed at the top of the newsletter. We'd still love to hear what all of you have been up to. As I noted, a "how I spent my shut-in time" article would be interesting.

If you get a chance, drop a note to: indymoparclub@indymoparclub.com

Again this month, give a big THANK YOU to all the healthcare & emergency workers, public servants and leaders, food service and all those in the critical business arena who are still so bravely helping the community, country and their fellow man.

Stay healthy and all the best,
Tom Kelly IMC Club Pres.



“The Good Old Days”

With the current havoc in the world dealing with the virus, not sure anything pre-March 2020 couldn't be looked upon as “the good ole days”. I know that's not entirely true as most people around my age have had some days in the past they'd rather not relive. Therefore, this story will take us back a few more years to the “good ole days of Mopar drag racing” from my perspective as a teenager.

As a bit of background, I apparently became a bit car crazy as a young kid according to stories my mom told me. I do remember her buying me my first model car at Hoagie's Market in Clermont when I was 6 or 7. She helped me put it together and I wrapped it in tissue in the box to take to school to show my buddies. I was later intrigued by the TV show ‘Route 66’ and assembled and painted a '62 Corvette model car like the one Buzz and Todd drove as they travelled the country each week. I kept that model on the couch armrest the entire time I watched each episode on our black and white TV.

My next major automotive influence was growing up about ¾ of a mile from Indianapolis Raceway Park. We lived in Clermont in the late 50's and the track was built & opened in 1960. Besides my favorite race, the “NHRA Nationals”, the track held the Yankee 300 (later 250) USAC Stock Car Race, various SCCA sports car road races and even motorcycle road races. As it was only a quick trip on my Sear bicycle with my brothers, we were standing at the fence or sitting in the trees across the road every summer weekend we could.

Around 1966, at the age of 14, my 8th grade art project was a colored pencil drawing of a Corvette Stingray versus a '66 Mustang fastback in front of the Indianapolis Raceway Park's DA Lubricant Starting Line Tower. The car bug had bitten, and I even got an ‘A’ on it as a reward!

Around that time, I started thinking about the need to save for my own car. It was difficult putting money away when I'd rather be buying another model car kit, but I slowly got started. I baled hay for a few summers for a farmer friend of my dad's, picked tomatoes on our farm for three summers and even caddied at the Indianapolis Country Club one summer to earn some ‘car’ money.

The icing on the cake though was when I turned 15, applied and got hired at Indianapolis Raceway Park (IRP) for the general grounds maintenance crew. Crew figuratively as it was mostly kids with a handful of men to keep everyone in line and oversee our work. But, finally, a real job making Minimum Wage and getting a paycheck! Riding my bike every morning, I'd arrive, stand in line with the others, hit the time clock and get an assignment for the day to cut weeds on the hillsides, push a mower along fence rows, paint bleachers, put up temporary wooden slat fence (to mark off the pits) or run jugs of water to the timing towers. I was on top of the world since we worked during the racing event, almost on ‘standby’ for any number of odd jobs during six days of the ‘Nationals’. Plenty of time to watch the races too and drool over the Stocks and Super Stocks. They were my favorites since they were the cars you could see out on the street.

Mondays after the typical weekly races were generally trash pick-up days. I always found a little extra change under the bleachers. I'd also gather up pages of wind-blown National Dragster weekly NHRA racing newspapers, piece one together and read about drag racing events across the country. My fascination with the '62-67 Mopar race cars kicked into high gear at that time. There was nothing to compare to the cross ram 413 or 426 Wedge Mopars or the '64-'65 Super Stock Race Hemis. They could write all the songs they wanted about ‘409s’, ‘fuel injected Corvettes’ and ‘Little GTOs’, but I watched them all get mowed down at the strip by the Mopars of the day so I knew the real story!

Money from my ‘real job’ started adding up quicker now for my ‘first car’ fund, something the \$0.75/hour baling hay hadn't done. Living on a farm, my dad had been letting us boys drive since we were 14 so anticipating taking my Driving Test, I practiced parallel parking between a couple of 55 gallon drums. I still took Driver's Ed in High School so I could get cheaper insurance and was amazed at how poorly some of the kids in my class drove! Getting my license proved to be fairly easy with all my prep so now it was time for my first car in 1968.

My dad and uncles all drove Dodges and Plymouths since I could remember. One of my uncles worked at various Chrysler dealerships over the years and always sold the family their new cars. After years of watching through the fence & then working at the Nationals, I had now become obsessed with Dodge & Plymouth race cars. I couldn't get enough of the car magazine articles when the new Mopar muscle cars hit the showrooms in 1967 in the form of the big block Barracudas, GTX & R/T. I saw my first '68 Road Runner

over Labor Day weekend of '67 (before they hit the showrooms) at the Nationals driving around on a Manufacturer's License Plate. Obviously, it was sent down by Chrysler to excite the racers and fans ahead of the car's public release. The moment I saw it, I fell in love with it! Even so, the Road Runners, Super Bees and GTS Darts were NEW cars. I was still in high school, only working summers and had saved a total of \$400 so a NEW car was out of the question.

So, my target purchase...? The Indiana State Police had just started turning in their used White over Blue, 2 door, 1963 and 1964 383 cu. in. Plymouths. They were on used car lots everywhere in town. They reminded me of the Max Wedge cars I'd been watching on the drag strip, so I looked at every one I saw. Unfortunately, I found that \$650-\$850 was the typical going price. A great deal looking back but then reality set in. My \$400 had to cover the car price and the first year's insurance. I had to reset my expectations.

Before "The Trader" and now the internet, other than driving all around town, you looked at the Classified Ads in the Indianapolis News or Star, for used cars. My search turned up a 1962 Plymouth Belvedere on the west side of Indy. No Max wedge or even a big block. It was a four-door sedan, Slant 6 with a 3-speed on the column. On the plus side, it was only \$325. That left money for insurance and even some gas money! Mom took me to see it while dad was at work. A quick test drive and that's all it took. My very own car!

I could go on but to keep this from getting even more boring, let's just say I made a few changes to personalize it. Some were not too bad, others too embarrassing to even discuss over 50 years later! On the positive side, I was now driving to IRP every day in the summer instead of riding a bike. And I spent many a lunch hour racing my work buddy in his 6-cylinder Mustang down the drag strip until time to clock back in and go back to cutting grass.

That time on the drag strip also whetted my appetite and as any gearhead knows, your car is never fast enough. And so it was with the trusty little Slant 6 Plymouth. About a year after buying it, I phoned Wreck's Inc. after seeing an ad in the paper. I inquired about their 383 to transplant into my '62. They had just taken in a rolled over '68 383-4spd Road Runner and would take \$500 for the engine and trans. My wonderful mom floated me the money and with the help of brothers Dan & Jim, my buddy Ron Kriech and welding help from friends and family, the '62 got the heart of a Road Runner transplanted after being suspended from a tree in the back yard.

The life of that car would be a story all by itself. Not long after the 383 installation, my dad borrowed it and wrecked it for me. My uncle showed up within a week with a one-owner '69 340 Dart Swinger they got in on trade. After asking me if I wanted to take it for a ride, the Dart had a new home. My brother Dan took ownership of the '62, replaced the front end and got it back on the road as his first car. Maybe I can get him to tell the rest of that story some time!

Well to finish this off, the 'Good Old Days' at IRP got even more interesting. I worked there for 3 years so saw a lot of racing and the best of the best Mopar race cars. My time there only instilled a stronger love of all things Mopar. IRP's maintenance barn along Hunter Road was the location of our time clock and provided storage for the mowers and other equipment we used. During the Nationals however, it also served as the race car tear-down inspection barn after Class Eliminations and Final Eliminations. My best memories were in 1968, watching pair after pair of '68 Hemi-Darts and Hemi-Cudas make their passes down the strip, then watching the winners and runners-up push their disassembled cars through the barn. We sat quietly in the shadows, listening to and watching, our Mopar heroes in awe!

Sox & Martin, Dick Landy, Ramchargers, Golden Commandos, John Hagan, Herb McCandless, Dave Wren, Ron Mancini, Jere Stahl, Tritak & Morgan, Arlen Vanke, Shirley Shahan, Tom Crutchfield, Butch Leal, Don Grotheer, Judy Lilly, on and on. Even the Mopar competition guys like Grumpy Jenkins, Dave Strickler, Bob Glidden, Jerry Harvey, Dyno Don and Gas Ronda. Thanks to that crazy little summer job at IRP, back in the 'good old days', I got to see them all!

I've accompanied this article with pictures of some of the incredible Mopar Stock and Super Stock Drag Race cars I idolized back in the day. Hope you enjoy!

Tom Kelly, May 2020



Pictures continued on Page 5





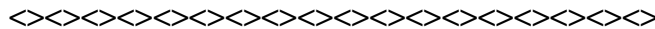
June 2020 Birthdays:

Jay Mays, 6-14
 Bob Thomas, 6-14
 Dave Stephenson, 6-15
 Steve Haug, 6-19
 Brian Harrell, 6-20
 Grant McBee, 6-21
 Randi Edgerton, 6-23
 Michelle Haug, 6-24
 Carlton Brock, 6-29

June Anniversaries:

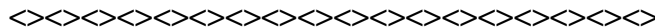
Mel and Barbara Crane, 6-2
 Ed and Mary Leyes, 6-8
 David and Erin Gut, 6-10
 Stephen and Cathleen Claycomb, 6-12
 Scott and Janet Oller, 6-12
 Ray and Bonita Brewer, 6-18
 Glenn and Tami Keilman, 6-20
 Sam and Sandra Willard, 6-20
 Randy and Ann Smith, 6-24
 Tom and Teresa Kelly, 6-25

Congratulations to all!



Tattler's Corner

With the Coronavirus on everyone's mind be careful where you go, who you are with, and stay safe. This detective is not able to do much snooping since we can't get together so if you hear of any "shenanigan's" that can be passed along please let Jan Peel know.



2020 INDY MOPAR CLUB – EVENT LIST – **TBV – to be verified **TBD** – to be determined-updated by Tom Kelly**

Mar	6	Fri		Indy Cyl Hd Show Set-up		Ronda Cherry
	7-8	Sat-Sun		Indy Cyl Hd Chrysler Performance Trade Show	Ind State Fairgrounds	Tom Kelly
←	26	Thur	7-8p	Indy Mopar Club Monthly Mtg	MCL Cafeteria	Tom Kelly →
Apr	30	Thur	7-8p	Indy Mopar Club Monthly Mtg	MCL Cafeteria	Tom Kelly →
May	2	Sat	11a-5p	Cinco de Mopar-Purdue Cancer Research Car Show - Lafayette, IN		Tom Kelly →
	9	Fri-Sat		FAST Pure Stock Drags - US 131 Motorsports Park - Martin, MI	Dave Watt/Mike Leyes	→
←	12-17	Tue-Sun		Mecum Collector Car Auction	IN State Fairgrounds	Tom Kelly →
←	16-17	Sat-Sun		Chrysler Power Classic Nat'l Trail Raceway	Columbus OH	Dave Watt →
←	28	Thur	7-8p	Indy Mopar Club Monthly Mtg	MCL Cafeteria	Tom Kelly →
Jun	17-21	Wed-Sun		Airflow Club of America 57 th National Meet	Independence, MO	Tom Kelly →
	17-21	Wed-Sun		Plymouth Owners Club National Meet	Springfield, IL	Tom Kelly Jan Peel →
	25	Thur	7-8p	Indy Mopar Club Monthly Mtg	MCL Cafeteria	Tom Kelly
Jul	11	Sat	10a-2p	Fletcher Chrysler - IMC Cruise-In	Franklin, IN	Steve Wisdom
	10-12	Fri-Sun		Carlisle Chrysler Nats	Carlisle PA	Dave Watt/Tom Kelly
	10-18	Fri-Sat		Mecum Collector Car Auction	IN State Fairgrounds	Tom Kelly
	7-29-8-2	Tue-Sun		National DeSoto Club National Meet	Brookfield, WI	Tom Kelly
	30	Thur	7-8p	Indy Mopar Club Monthly Mtg	MCL Cafeteria	Tom Kelly

